THE EYE:

BY OBADIAH OPTIC.

——VARIOUS OBJECTS FROM THE SENSE,
VARIOUSLY REPRESENTING. MILTON.

Vol. II.] THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 1808. [No. 6.

ORIGINAL.

THE EXPATIATOR.—No. V.

THE following singular essay by *Sam Scribble*, I am induced to publish as a specimen of his composition; my readers will form an opinion of him, as an author, without my assistance.

TO THE EXPATIATOR.

SIR,

I WAS not a little vexed that you should expose what I communicated to you in confidence; however, as the matter has taken a different turn from what I expected, you are at liberty either to make public or not, whatever I may furnish you with, and I shall endeavour to make the best advantage of your freedom.

Under the influence of my promise, I sat down to write a moral essay; I attempted to be serious, and became stupid—my ideas flowed, but in a shallow channel, consequently they were not clear. I saw my error—the discovery was flattering, for the proverb 'To know our faults is a mark of wisdom,' very politely introduced itself to my recollection—I had heard it or something similar.——Memory is a sycophant—why? because it flatters—this was my cue—the subject was in my head—it was electric—I hastily seized my pen as a conductor, when, by some strange economy of philosophy, my thoughts soon appeared on paper—I read them over—how dull!—a plague on such abstract subjects, thought I,—*Flattery* is no theme for me.—I sat musing awhile, snuffed the candle, mended my pen, dipped it again in the ink, and, without a single thought, applied it to paper—the effect it produced was the following essay, which, though you may

ascribe to me, be assured I had the least to do in its composition, the lines grew involuntary till the pen marked the concluding point.

THE PROGRESS OF MAN; OR, THE MISERIES OF MATRIMONY.

AMONG all the subjects which have been expatiated on, as relating to the happiness of man, none perhaps will rank higher in the scale of excellence than that of celibacy. Fully to illustrate its advantages would exhaust the powers of genius. None, I presume, who can read, will disallow its prerogative of ancestry, for we do not find that ADAM had a wife before EVE was created—nor did he know the cares and perplexities of life, till he experienced the embraces of a woman;—therefore I infer, that as trouble did not exist in the world till the first man got a wife—wives are the causes of all the miseries that do exist.—I will not descend to particulars, but take a perspective view of all men, as exemplified in the progress of one.

Behold the infant son, born to inherit the ample fortune of a parent whose only care (independent of affection for his wife) is to bring up his child in such manner as that he shall shine in the world; every attention is paid to his nursing, his health, his sports and his education, which plenteous resources can command;—the young squire shews, at times, whilst in the arms of his mother or nurse, early tokens of his aversion to women; their kindest caresses will not always have sufficient influence to soothe him or make him satisfied with his situation—as his age increases, he grows more peevish and more impatient of restraint—till—ah, happy period!—he bursts forth from the nursery, mingles with those of congenial dispositions, and among his sprightly school-fellows spurns at the manacles of female government—Yet what has been early impressed on the mind cannot be obliterated in a moment—he often feels the effect of that weakness which still prompts in his bosom an affection toward those females who fostered him in his helpless days—'tis a weakness interwoven with the nature of man:—But, maturer years separate him from the society of these primary objects of his love—he is sent to the university—a college life is a life of joy—here Genius and Wit are companions with Eccentricity and Gaiety—even Wisdom sometimes forsakes her midnight lamp to sport in the sunshine of pleasure—here the

impressions of nature become more faint, but are not wholly lost—affection still draws his heart to a fond mother, though he will sometimes blush to confess it;—at length the time arrives when he is to part with his associates and engage in new scenes of life—he returns to his parental home, full of knowledge, philosophy and ideas, not learned, but acquired. The fashionable scenes of the city—every thing gay is enchanting to his liberal mind—his scholastic stiffness soon wears away, and he becomes an active and accomplished gallant. Fatal infatuation! some beautiful female excites his admiration—has he not cause to lament that he has the penetration to discover that her mind is not barren—and O, still more fatal discernment! he finds her heart is formed according to his ideas of virtue—further, she is not insensible to the advantages of her conquest—she sees the effect her attractions have on his conduct—in short, they marry—and become as miserable as an entire devotion to each other, and a mutual interchange of confidence and affection can render them.

Thus it is with every subject relative to the happiness of mankind—philosophers may write and describe the path of pleasure as strewed with thorns; but strip the moral system of matrimony, and what will be the consequence?—where will be the thorns?—let those who never wore the chain answer.

Art thou a young man? scenes of voluptuous bliss invite thee to participation, and though age may steal upon thee and render thee incapable of enjoying those sweets, yet the decline of life will not be embittered by the officious attentions of a wife: The music of adulation from those who are anxious to divide thy fortune, will charm thee to the tomb—thou wilt leave no cares behind—Death will extinguish thy name—and thy heirs will celebrate thy constancy by the circulation of thy wealth—and the virtues of celibacy will be the song of those whose pleasures sparkle in the rosy wine.

Your's, SAM SCRIBBLE.

It is unnecessary for me to add any comment on the above; those who know the felicity attached to the marriage state, will smile at every futile effort to prove celibacy productive of happiness: The picture my correspondent has drawn is rather a ludicrous one, and calculated to prove the contrary of what he wishes to establish; I shall therefore dispatch him, with the harmless wish, that he may know, by experience, the opposite side of the subject he attempts to favour. O.

COMMUNICATED FOR THE EYE.

AN IRONICAL ORATION ON DUELLING:

Delivered at a public commencement of the University of Pennsylvania, in the year 1805, by a graduate.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE the honour of addressing you on the ancient and honourable practice of *duelling*. Had I no higher object than to amuse you with description, or kindle a flash of feeling, I would call the duel, the crest of human glory, the *cheap* defence of honour, the Corinthian pillar of polished society. But such pompous encomiums would be as offensive to the correct taste of this audience, as the tremendous declamations of the enemies of duelling, who, by daubing it over with the horrid colours of malice and murder, have exposed it in such a shocking appearance, that one would think it fitter for the infernal spirits, than for the most polite class of mankind. Avoiding equally the partiality which drives praise to extravagance, and the moroseness which delights in aggravating the atrociousness of what it would calumniate; let us calmy enquire into the good and evil of duelling, and carry candour along with us.

Let it be admitted that the duel partakes of the imperfection of human things, producing, when it falls into improper hands, partial evil; tho' its natural tendency is towards general good. After this large concession is made, still it can be asserted, that the duel has been practised, time immemorial in all civilized states; that it has never degenerated from its original principles and tendency; that it has been adored by those who have experienced its beneficial consequences; and reprobated by such only as have had no practical acquaintance with it; that, when properly managed, it has never failed to remove controversy and its *cause* out of society; and that in no single instance whatever, has the loser, who is always so apt to complain, carried an appeal from a *definitive* sentence to any human tribunal: Can the pulpit or bar say so much for any of their institutions?

The enemies of duelling fight with a shadow: What a horrid crime, they exclaim, for one Christian to shed the blood of another in a duel! Who ever doubted it? but who ever heard of such a thing? These gentlemen when they prove that *certain classes* of mankind ought not to fight duels, sophistically conclude that the duel is *universally* unlawful. Now the advo-

cates for duelling unequivocally declare, that the duel would be debased by rendering it universal; they maintain that not one in ten thousand, of the human race, is entitled to the honour of leaving the world in this manner. The ladies are excluded in a mass; because it appears to be the intention of the CREATOR, that they should cherish, not destroy human life. Their virtues are of a very different nature from those displayed on the duel ground; besides, as ladies never give the *lie*, the cause of the duel does not exist among them. Among men, that large class denominated Christians, are prohibited by this law, and restrained by their temper, from shedding blood in single combat; humility is their honour, and forgiveness their pistol. Lawyers settle their disputes by the statute book; the merchant appeals to his ledger, and the labouring classes of mankind, are so little accustomed to think, that they are incapable of forming the extremely abstruse and refined idea of *honour*, which makes it a man's duty to shoot his friend —and hence they universally confound the duel with murder.

There remains therefore only one small class who has the least pretension to the duel; I mean *gentlemen, or men of honour*, so called, because honour serves them for bible, GOD, and conscience, they live, swear, and die by honour. In a word, they are subjects of the law of honour. But what is the law of honour? were it the law of GOD, the law of the land, or the law of nations, modesty would seal my lips in the presence of this learned assembly. But as there may not be a man of honour present, I shall answer that query in the exquisite words of PALEY.

"The law of honour," says that great philosopher "omits all such duties as relate to the Supreme Being, as well as those which we owe to our superiours; for which reason, profaneness, neglect of public worship, or private devotion, cruelty to servants, injurious treatment of tenants or other dependants, want of charity to the poor, injuries done to tradesmen by insolvency or delay of payment, with numberless other instances of the same kind, are accounted no breaches of honour; because a man is not the less agreeable companion for these vices, nor the worse to deal with, in those concerns which are usually transacted between one gentleman and another."—He adds—

"Again, the law of honour being constituted by men occupied in the pursuit of pleasure, and for the mutual conveniency of such men, will be found, as might be expected from the

character and design of the law makers to be, in most instances, favourable to the licentious indulgence of the natural passions." And concludes with these words, which should be engraven on the heart of every gentleman—"Thus, it allows of fornication, adultery, drunkeness, prodigality, duelling, and of revenge in the extreme, and lays no stress upon the virtues opposite to these."

The greatest advocate for duelling never extended the privilege beyond these honourable men—it is their rights as *gentlemen*, their elective franchise, their jury trial, their coat of arms; in short, they could no more do without it, than a philosopher without cockle-shells and butterflies; abolish duels, and they cease to be accountable creatures; how could they be governed or settle their controversies without it? how often, for instance, does it become necessary to ascertain which of two gentlemen is a liar, or which of them is best beloved by their common female friend? these, and a thousand other equally difficult and important subjects admit of no other mode of decision: I hope a great and magnanimous nation will never rob gentlemen of a privilege without which the association of honour would crumble into atoms. And when it is considered, that the principle of accommodation is interwoven with the whole texture of our constitution and laws, that it has been carried so far as to allow a large class of the community to speak the truth without swearing; I hope it will not be refused to men of honour to settle their disputes in their own way.

More might be said, if one dare. Our constitution, after all the fine things that have been said of its merits, which indeed are great; is grossly wrong in the articles which forbid nobility and titles of honour: It should be amended so as to admit the consecration of a nobility of merit, without remainder however: Into this legion of honour should be admitted all such as could prove themselves subjects of the law of honour, in all its positive and negative clauses, which proof would be an easy matter, as their conduct is notorious. The title should continue for life, unless forfeited by some dishonourable crime, such as repentance. The insignia of the order should be a dagger worn at the belt; and to distinguish them from an industrious class of citizens; a cap should be added surmounted with a large pair of horns.

The advantages of such an order would be incalculable, for 1*st*. Common citizens could then avoid their company, and

2*d*. When foreign men of honour would visit our cities, they could at once find gentlemen to conduct them to places of genteel resort, and display our virtues and manners to them in the most advantageous light, while our illustrious guests would be spared those aukward embarassments into which they are so apt to fall, upon their first mixing with our simple and unpolished citizens; duels among such should be transferred from the class of crimes to that of virtues.

This matter is perfectly practicable. For if it it be a correct principle that the materials of legislation should be sought for in the tacit maxims and habits of society, no time can be more suitable for such a law than the present, as public sentiment has anticipated the law. Death by duel is not at all considered as murder.

Should one drunken porter in a rage knock out the brains of another, with a billet of wood or paving stone; or a negro in the kitchen run a fellow servant through the guts with a spit; the city would be thrown into universal uproar, the union would ring with proclamations and rewards for his apprehension; nought but his blood could appease the incensed vengeance of the comunity; because such persons are considered as subjects of *moral* government—but a man of honour steps out in the morning with his second and surgeon, blows out his friends brains with a pistol, or whips him genteely through the body with a small-sword; returns home, dines with his friends, and appears at the theatre in the evening perfectly disembarrassed; and were it not for the licentiousness of the press, nobody would hear a whisper of the matter. No person considers it as *murder; homicide* it cannot be in any sense of the word; it is only the *extinction* of a *gentleman*.

Any objections I have heard against duelling, are, in my humble opinion, and I hope you will think so too, unworthy of a serious answer. To the pathetic descriptions of weeping mothers, and sobbing sisters, and widows dissolved in tears; I answer in the words of the poet, that

> "Heaven is pleased to make distress become them,
> And clotheth them most amiable in tears."

You exclaim, it was a violation of the law of the land—I answer, that is the law's fault, repeal it, and the offence ceases—but the man deserted his post? No, he fell at it; he left a blank however in society—grant at least that society has been saved the trouble of making the erasure.

But of all things, I am surprised that it should be made an objection to duelling, that it excludes from the kingdom of Heaven. The objection would be insuperable if any man of honour ever purposed, or wished to remove to that country; but its laws, maxims, habits, and enjoyments are so entirely at war with all the souls of men of honour, that if they were cast on its shores by shipwreck, they would leave it the first fair wind. I have read somewhere that the devil quitted it as soon as he got a spark of honour in him, and I presume men of honour would follow the example. The only dishonourable circumstance attending the death by duel, and for which I owe the mortification of an apology, is, that when gentlemen have not had the happiness of being killed dead on the spot, they have been known, in a few rare instances, to pray; and, which is still more rare, clergymen have been sent for. But when it is considered how much mental energy is impaired by a large effusion of blood, a candid mind will attribute such seeming defection, to debility of reason, or the recurrence of childish habits. Besides, the occurrence is extremely rare. In a word, if duelling were confined to its proper objects, *men of honour*, there is no reason why the laws should prohibit it; no cause why we should be disturbed with absurd lamentations about the irreparable injury it does to society. And if once in a century a moral agent should, without passing through the lower grades of promotion, aspire at once to the honour of fighting a duel, men of honour shew their liberality by admitting him into their corps without further ceremony: And surely it betrays little dignity on the part of those whom he forsook, to mourn inconsolably over the loss of a man who would rather be damned than keep their company.

SELECTED.

ADVENTURES IN A COFFEE-HOUSE.

(concluded from page 59.)

I FOLDED up this billet, and laid it close by him; and presently afterwards I looked through my fingers and beheld him take it up gapingly. He then threw his capacious eyes at me, got up, and calling the waiter, asked him, in a half whisper, whether, it was easy for a man to escape out of bedlam and give his keeper the slip. After this sally of pleasan-

try, he burst into a violent laugh, and went shaking his sides out of the coffee-room.

My situation cannot easily be imagined: I paid for my paper, execrated my folly, and hurried away with the burning blushes of disappointment. In my way to my own little apartment, I broke forth into such sentiments as these:

"Oh my God of Heaven! Is it—is it possible? Can the human heart be so egregiously inhuman? If this fellow did not choose to relieve me, why, ah! why should he insult me! Why should he add the pains of indignity to those of indigence! How could he stoop from humanity so very low! But his heart will yet ache for his behaviour; and I shall hear that he suffers for it."

As I was turning a corner, a poor female figure with a small bundle of matches invited my pity, with want in her face, sorrow in her voice, and grief in her eyes: Indeed I am not a common beggar, sir (said she) my husband is too sick to labour, my children are too young to work—pity me then, and excuse me; a half-penny would buy us the bread we have wanted since last night.

I had but a penny upon earth, but I had a dinner provided at home for my family; so I gave her the penny, and apologized for the size of the present. The woman said nothing; but looked every thing, laid her hand upon her heart, held her apron up to her eyes, and went away.

What I felt upon this action Almighty God only can tell—He gave it, he only can describe it. I went up into my room, where I had no sooner entered than my wife threw her arms around my neck, and told me she had news for me—"Poor Mr. Jenkins, my love, (said she) has been grateful enough to return you the two guineas you lent him two years ago, and we may now make ourselves quite happy. We sat down to dinner, and it was a most luxurious meal; for Love, Gratitude, Friendship, and Content were our guests. Weep no more, my best Billy, (said my wife) after dinner; Providence never forsakes us, but assists us in the very moment of extremity. Little George is much better than he was in the morning; Sally's fever is abated; I have got in a new supply of plain work, and Betsy can quite master the song you are so fond of; and so, if you choose to indulge yourself in your half pint of wine, she shall try her voice, and we shall be the happiest circle in the world. And is it possible, (said I) that tenderness and constancy should be thus superiour to all

the unwieldy apathy of wealth and plenty. O the warm glow of sensibility! O the tender grace of the domestic heart! I feel it, I venerate it, I weep over it!

In a few minutes my daughter, in a sweet and pathetic voice, sung the follow verses:

What is splendour, what is wealth?
What the diamond's dazzling shine?
Real riches glow in health;
Those are genuine, those are mine!

True it is, the coach of state,
The palace, and the costly fare,
Are to me denied by fate:
These I lose—but these are care.

Then begone the joys of gold,
Farewell folly, farewell dress!
Calmly I the heaps behold,
And only ask for happiness.

SELECTED.

THE PASSIONS; OR, 'TIS ALL MACHINERY.

A fragment from HELVETIUS.

DISPUTE it not, said I, Sophronius; 'tis all machinery. We are wrought upon entirely by our feelings, our appetites, our passions; and even these are agitated by every breath of accident, every caprice of fortune, every vagary in nature. The examples are hurrying so rapidly to my memory, and soliciting so strongly for communication, that—that—that—'tis all machinery; the whimsy urges, and every body feels, or hath felt, that our passions are irresistible—They do what they will.

Poor Carius! Why so disconsolate? Thou whose temper inclineth to every thing airy, every thing light, wherefore seekest thou, even in the middle of a summer morning, the dark recesses of the closet? Why are the shutters of thy window closed, to interrupt the cheerful sun-beams? Why that sombre solemnity of brow!—Heavens, man! the tear is swimming in thine eye—Ho, ho, now I perceive the cause: Chloe has sent thee an angry letter; she chides, she complains, she resolves to banish thee from her presence for ever. Well may'st thou sigh, well may'st thou seek the solitary corner. Well may'st thou crush the cruel epistle; now tremble over

the contents, and now tear it to pieces.—The whimsy urges, and 'tis all machinery. The passions play on him—they do what they will.

But soft! the scene changes; Carius' servant enters, and presents a paper; it seems superscribed in the same character. Wafer, by your leave. If smiles, pleasing tremblings, agreeable agitations evidence any sensations, the news is good. Ha, ha, ha! open, open the shutters this moment, throw up the sashes; admit the now welcome light of heaven; lay out my most brilliant suit; prepare my chariot, and look to the pliant springs, that they may carry me thither with the speed of thought. Hoity-toity! Whither in such a hurry, my impetuous friend?—Not a word?—Is't then so? Dost thou permit me to peruse it?—Now for it then.

TO CARIUS.

My anger is past. I have been to blame. I charge thee come this moment, and seal my pardon; seal it upon my lips. CHLOE.

No wonder the young gentleman flew; the passions prompted, and they do what they will. Poor fellow, he leapt from the ground into the carriage, light of heart, light of heel; 'tis all machinery. The whimsy urges me to follow him—Fancy flies faster than the swiftest pair of horses; she enables me to see him rush from the chaise into the fair arms of Chloe. Delicious moment, enriched by the rapture of reconciliation! The little transient cloud is blown over, and it is love's meridian. O, roguish nature! how she colours the cheek! how she plays with the heart! What a precious palpitation! Poor Carius, how art thou fix'd upon the lip! Poor Chloe, how prettily thou failest upon the young man's shoulder! They are both subdued by those passions which do what they will; and the victorious ecstasy shews, 'tis all machinery.

The hour of returning is come. They recover from one passion, to fall a victim to another. And must we part? O, insupportable! Ah, Chloe!—Ah Carius!—Farewell, farewell. In his way home, the carriage is, by the carelessness of the driver, overthrown; the arms of Carius are both broken. From the gaieties of love, he is carried to the sorrows of a sick chamber. The shutters are again closed, the curtains are again drawn. The surgeon appears with a pedantic face, and instruments of torture; the burning fever, the irregular pulse, the insupportable agony succeed. The soul sympathises with the body. 'Tis all machinery. *(to be concluded)*

PUT THE BEST FACE ON YOUR OWN AFFAIRS.

PUTTING the best face on your affairs has been advised as a matter of prudence, and the people of Ireland seem to adopt the maxim. Two of them, who had left the banks of the Shannon at the same time, once meeting in the streets of London, after the usual congratulations, enquired into each others situations, and one of them said, "He had been *so lucky* as to be appointed *master of the horse*; and pray, Patrick, what are you?"—"Why I have been still more fortunate, for I am made *under secretary of state*."—"The devil you are! but how *so*, Pat, when you can neither read nor write?"—"O faith let me alone for that; my master is a coal-merchant, and I keep the tally, and chalk up the numbers of the sacks as they pass under the gateway. Pray, Terence, how are you master of the horse?"—"Why, I am assistant to the assistant of the hostler at the Golden Cross, Charing Cross, my dear."

A METAPHYSICAL AND POLITICAL DIALOGUE.

AT the breaking out of the war with France, which was commenced in consequence of the French joining the Americans. Sir Joseph York, meeting the French ambassador at the Hague, censured the Gallic court for interfering in the dispute, adding, "You have been unpardonably ungenerous,—your crime is no less than that of *debauching* our daughter."—"I am sorry (replied the Frenchman) that your excellency should put so severe a construction on the matter; she made the first advances, and absolutely threw herself into our arms; but rather than forfeit your friendship, if matrimony will give satisfaction, we are *ready* to act honourably and *marry* her."

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THE first time that Mr. Pitt went to Cambridge, after his election for the university, all the *clerical fry* were (as might be expected) gaping for *lawn sleeves*, and other good things, in the gift of their representative. Dr. Patley preached before the young *premier*, from the following text: *There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes, but what are they among so many?*

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THE EYE-LASH.—No. V.

FOR THE EYE-LASH.

"O that I had been made an oyster! that I had been stationed at the bottom of the sea—the winds might have blown and swelled the waves mountains high; I should not have heeded them. Mankind might have satiated themselves with folly, iniquity and deceit—it would not have troubled me."

WHEN I look at man, the prospect disgusts me—I see a miserable animal endeavouring to heap his load of wretchedness upon another more miserable.—I see a weak, contemptible creature, aiming at happiness without any title to it, without knowing how to obtain it. I am tired of the world. The greatest villain is the most prosperous man! 'O that I were an oyster!'

See man in wealth—he knows not how to use it—he squanders his riches on the profligate and vicious, while the needy mendicant is denied the crumbs that fall from his table; he rolls in a splendid equipage, regardless of every virtue, and consults his discernment how he may best appear an object of admiration to the poor, and a mark of envy to his equals in fortune. He attains this pitch of greatness by fraud and dishonesty, and leaves no vice unpractised by which he may surcharge his coffers. He cares nothing for his fellow creatures and refuses to relieve their miseries; if he is indebted for his prosperity to friendship—gratitude knows no place in his heart. Degraded man; blush for thy crimes—go hang thyself!

In a middle sphere, he is in agonies until he can rival the richest in wealth, he is ever unhappy at the prospect of mediocrity, and anticipates with pain the strokes of misfortune;

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